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March 10, 2010

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"Foreign companies are not playing by the same safety rules as U.S. businesses, and Americans are paying the price," said Rep. Melancon. **"For years, toxic Chinese drywall has been entering our country and contaminating our homes, but Louisianians have had few options for holding the foreign manufacturers accountable."**

"That's why I'm fighting to pass bipartisan legislation in Congress to help victims of Chinese drywall get the justice they deserve and hit these irresponsible manufacturers where it hurts them the most: in the pocketbook. Until these foreign companies are held accountable, dangerous and defective products will continue harming our families."

Currently, Louisianians harmed by toxic Chinese drywall have few options for justice other than engaging in cost-prohibitive and time-consuming international legal battles. Few receive the redress they deserve. The Foreign Manufacturers Legal Accountability Act (H.R. 4678) would help Chinese drywall victims and other injured American consumers hold accountable the responsible foreign manufacturers.

Specifically, the legislation would make it easier for an injured consumer to serve the foreign manufacturer with notice of pending legal claims by requiring companies doing business in the U.S. to identify a registered agent authorized to accept service of process on behalf of them. Covered products include drugs, devices, cosmetics, biological products, consumer products,

chemical substances, and pesticide manufactured or produced outside of the United States. [Click here to see the fact sheet](#) for further details.

The legislation has bipartisan support and is supported by the Consumer Federation of America and the Consumers Union.

A Senate companion bill (S. 1606) has been introduced by Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Jeff Sessions (R-AL) and Richard Durbin (D-IL).

Congressman Melancon has also [introduced legislation](#) to help Louisiana homeowners with defective Chinese drywall in their homes keep their homeowners' insurance. The Drywall Victims Insurance Protection Act would prevent insurance companies from cancelling or failing to renew homeowners' policies as the result of Chinese drywall in the home. The bill would also prevent insurers from changing rates or altering the type or amount of coverage based on problems stemming from Chinese drywall. The Drywall Victims Insurance Protection Act would also protect homeowners' rights to sue their insurance companies if their coverage is dropped because of Chinese drywall problems.

Many homeowners have reported that defective Chinese drywall in their homes emits sulfur, methane and other fumes that have damaged their homes and pose a serious health risk for residents. Reported health problems include nosebleeds, respiratory ailments, headaches, insomnia, and skin irritation.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 7 million sheets of Chinese drywall were imported between 2000 and 2009 - enough to have built tens of thousands of homes. Some consumer advocates have estimated that the cost of property damage could reach \$3 billion. The problem could become especially serious in Louisiana, where thousands of new homes were rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina, many using Chinese drywall.

Approximately 3,000 homeowners nationwide have filed Chinese drywall complaints with the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Consumers are also encouraged to file complaints with the Louisiana Attorney General's Office at 800-351-4889 or www.agbuddycaldwell.com and the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/index.html.